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IV

Tel Taps and Photo Surveillance

Mr. Helms offered testimony regarding the CIA's reticence to inform the Warren Commission, at least during the initial stages of its investigation, of the existence of ^{at CIA} telephonic and photo surveillance operations in Mexico City directed against the Cuban and Soviet Embassy / Consulate. Helms' testifies:

The reason for the sensitivity of these telephone taps and surveillance was not only because it was sensitive from the Agency's standpoint, but the telephone taps were running in conjunction with the Mexican authorities and therefore, if this had become public knowledge, it would have caused very bad feelings between Mexico and the United States, and that was the reason.

[Helms Exec Session hearing, pp 51-52, regarding ^{Govt. of} Mexico involvement see —]

Nevertheless, the CIA had provided information to the FBI regarding the Mexico City surveillance operations

up to the assassination and during the post-assassination period on a regular basis [cites?]
In addition, as of November 28, 1963 the White House, through information made available to ^{by DCI McGeorge} National Security Council? Since Mr. George Bundy was aware that the CIA had telephone taps in operation against the Cuban and Soviet Embassy / Consulate and that through these taps Oswald's presence ~~at~~ in Mexico City ^{prior to the assassination} had been corroborated.

The CIA's reticence to inform the Warren Commission of the surveillance operations and ^{all the details} ~~the~~ ^{to volunteer} ~~the~~ Commission in the early stages of the investigation ~~and~~ the transcription of Oswald's ^{conversations} ~~with~~ Cuban Soviet and Cuban officials is a source of concern to this Committee. It is indicative of an attitude on the Agency's part, ~~which is not~~ ^{to} unilaterally determine the substance of CIA generated information to be provided the Warren Commission. [See Scels. dep. I]. This process might well have hampered the Commission's ability to proceed

in its investigation with all the facts before it, even those which oppose certain sensitive operations to the Commission.

to the Commission.
On January 31, 1967, the CIA provided the Warren Commission with a memorandum that chronicled Lee Harvey Oswald's Mexico City visit during Sept 26, 1963 - October 3, 1963. That memorandum ~~also~~ made no mention of the fact that Oswald's various conversations with the Cuban and Soviet Embassy/Consulate had been tapped and subsequently transcribed. Furthermore, that memorandum made no mention of the fact that the CIA had tapped and transcribed conversations between Cuban Embassy employee ~~Sgt~~ Sylvia Duran and Soviet officials at the Soviet Embassy/Consulate nor was mention made of the conversations between Cuban President Dorticos and Cuban Ambassadors to Mexico which the CIA had also tapped and transcribed.

On February 10, 1964, J. Lee Rankin wrote Helms in regard

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Helms
appeared
before the
committee
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to the CIA memorandum of January 31. A review of Rankin's letter indicates that at least as of the letter date the Warren Commission had no ^{substantive} knowledge of the telephone surveillance operation & the production i.e., the tapes and transcripts, from that operation. Rankin inquired on the February 10, 1964 whether Oswald's direct communication with employees of the Soviet Embassy (as stated in # — of the January 31 memorandum) had been facilitated by telephone & interview. Manifestly, if the Warren Commission had been informed of the telephone surveillance operation and its success in tapping Oswald's, the inquiry by Rankin would not have been made.

Raymond Rocca's testimony tends to support this conclusion. It was Rocca's recollection that between the time period of January 1964 - April 1964, Warren Commission representatives had visited the CIA's headquarters in Langley, Virginia

and had been shown various transcripts resulting from the CIA's telephone surveillance operations in Mexico City. [Rocca dy. p 89]

However, Mr. Rocca did not personally make this material available to Commission representatives and was not able to state under oath ^{precisely} the point in time at which the Warren Commission learned of these operations.

On 7 January 19, 1964 the CIA responded to Rankin's inquiry of 4 January 10. The Agency response did indicate that Oswald had phoned the ~~the~~ Soviet Consulate and was also interviewed at the Consulate. However, the Agency did not reveal the source of this information in its response to the Commission or indicate that it would be revealed by other means (e.g. by oral briefing)

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During the period of March - April 1964, David Slawson drafted a series of memoranda which ^{among other issues} concerned, Warren Commission knowledge and access to the production materials derived from the CIA telephone surveillance operations in Mexico City. A review of these memoranda tend to support the Committee's belief that Warren Commission, through Moses Slawson, Coleman, and Willers did not obtain access to ^{CIA} telephone surveillance materials until April 9, 1964. At that time, Coleman, Slawson and Willers met with Win Scott, the CIA's Chief of Station in Mexico City who provided them with various transcript and translations derived from CIA telephone taps of the Cuban and Soviet Embassy / Consulates. [Slawson memorandum of April 22, 1964, Subject:]

However, ~~it~~ prior to that date it appears doubtful that ^{the Commission} had been given ^{even partial} access to the referenced materials ^(the record) ~~on~~ March 12, 1964, ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~record~~ ~~app~~ ~~indicates~~ ~~that~~ the Warren Commission had at least become aware that

Scite 3 One ^{on the} ~~other~~
lane activities in Mexico City. ~~XXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXX~~ could well have provided
the Warren Commission with this
information. Nevertheless, Raymond
Rocas testimony as cited herein Rocas
dep. 3 lends ^{some} support to the
position that the Commission had
been informed of the Daticos - Armas
conversations through the CIA's
initiative.

Another
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~, Slawson
memorandum, dated March 25, 1964
concerned Oswald's trip to Mexico.
Slawson therein stated that the
tentative conclusions ^{as} related to
Oswald Mexico trip, that he had read
were derived from CIA memoranda
of January 31, 1964 and February 19, 1964.
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ and a ^{meditation} ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{Mexican fed'l}
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{summary} ^{copy}
of interrogations ^{conducted after the assassination w/} certain Cuban
Embassy employees. Slawson
wrote:

a large part of it (the summary
report) is simply a summation of
what the Mexican police learned
when they interrogated Mrs. Silvia
Duran, a ^{ESIC3} employee of the Cuban

Consulate in Mexico City, and is
therefore only as accurate as
Mrs. Duran's testimony to the
police.

~~that Slawson~~ ~~These~~ ~~comment~~ ~~upon~~ ^{indicate}
~~limited release~~ ~~upon~~
The Mexican police summary ^{moreover} there is
no indication that Slawson had been
provided ~~the~~ ~~telephone~~ ~~intercept~~ ~~transcript~~ ~~which~~
the Duran telephone intercept transcript, ~~which~~
The Committee's belief that
Slawson had not been given access
to the Duran transcripts is further
supported by reference to his memora-
andum of March 27, 1964. [Cite]
wherein he states ~~that~~ his ~~conclusion~~
conclusion that Oswald had visited
the Cuban Embassy on three occasions.
This conclusion he writes is based
upon an ~~analysis~~ analysis of Silvia Duran's
testimony before the Mexican police.
Once again, ~~there~~ there is no
indication that he had reviewed
any of the Duran transcripts.
Had Slawson been given access to
these transcripts, his analysis
perhaps ~~should~~ have reflected the
fact of the review either by its corrobora-
tion a criticism of the Mexican
police summary report.

the Duran
On fact
by virtue
of Slawson
comment
concerning
the Duran
transcripts
as of March
25 had been
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information
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of Duran

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had been
given access
to the
transcripts,
obtaining their
contents
incorporated
into his analysis
and accordingly
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As of March 25, 1964, the record demonstrates that the Warren Commission, in its effort to investigate Oswald's activities in Mexico City had not been given access to the Duran transcripts. The Commission had been forced to rely upon the two memoranda that did not make reference to the surveillance operations and a summary police report. The Agency had been successful for over 3 months in not exposing the surveillance operations to the review of the concerned Warren Commission staff members. As was stated in the CIA cable to its Mexico City Station, ^{December 20, 1964}

Our present plan in passing info to Warren Commission is to eliminate mentioning telephone taps, in order protect your continuing ops. Will rely instead on statements of Silvia Duran and on contents of Soviet consular file which Soviets gave ODACID here.

(CIA cable, DIR 90466, FOIA 420-759, Dec 20, 1964 CIA p2144)

On March 27, 1964 Slawson wrote that he had determined that Oswald had visited the Cuban Embassy three times. He stated that this conclusion was based upon his review of Silva Duran's testimony to the Mexican police. [Slawson's memorandum, March 27, 1964, CIA P 19727. Slawson does not state that his conclusion was also drawn from review of any of the production from the Mexico City ^{station} surveillance operation. Slawson does indicate, however, that his reasoning ^{is ambiguous} regarding Oswald's visits to the Cuban Embassy. Logically, access to the ^{telephone} surveillance production would have clarified some ambiguities. For example, on September 27, at 4:05 p.m. Silva Duran telephoned the Soviet Embassy and stated that an American was waiting at the Cuban Embassy, requesting an in-transit visa to Cuba. This American was determined by CIA analysts to be Oswald. Again on September 28, at 11:51 a.m. ^{Slawson} telephoned the Soviet Consulate stating that an American, identified by CIA analysts as Oswald is at the Cuban Embassy. Thus, on two specific occasions it is definitively established that Oswald had visited the Cuban Embassy on at least two occasions.

Moreover the specific date and exact time of his presence in the Cuban Embassy are established as the result of the telephonic surveillance. And this information been made available to Glavin, the calculation of Oswald's activities in Mexico City would have been more firmly established than the when of March 27, 1964. The transcripts could have been made available to the Warren Commission at its inception but ^{as the records} they were not then made available.

The record supports the Committee finding that as of April 2, 1964 the Warren Commission had still not been given access to the ^{audio} ~~transcripts~~ ^{of the} ~~intercepts~~ ^{of the} ~~intercepts~~. On a memorandum by Coleman and Glavin, they articulate one question ^{for} ~~and~~ two requests for information from the Agency: [Ambassador Mann file memo April 2, 1964, ^{ENC 1975} ~~may 1975~~]

- 1) What is the information source referred to in the November 28, telegram that Oswald intended to settle down in Odessa;
- 2) We would like to see copies of the transcripts of the intercepts, translated if possible, in all cases where the intercept refers to the ~~concerned~~ ^{concerned} ~~subject~~ ^{subject} or related subjects;

- 3) We would especially like to see the intercept in which the allegation that money was passed at the Cuban Embassy is discussed.

The question initially posed in the above-referenced memorandum, April 12, concerns the CIA Telephone Intercept of September 27, 1963 at 10:57 a. m. (Slawson memo, April 22, 1964, CIA p 32:33). Nevertheless, if Slawson is asked for the source of the information, he has not been provided that source which in this case is the telephone intercept cited herein.

^{first}
The Column. Slawson request further-
more clearly advised that he did not
~~believe that they had~~ ^{been given access}, at the very
least, to all intercepts concerning
the assassination (as is clearly constab-
ated by the question set forth above). Moreover,
the request could well be interpreted
to mean that they had not been
given access to any of the subject material.
The second request, item no 3 of the
above listing reveals that the
intercept, the Datus - Armed
Conservation of November 22, 1964, in
which the passing of money is
discussed has not as yet been
provided to the Commission. If

Commission had specifically requested the Dattus - Arnold transcripts at the March 12, 1964 meeting between ^{Commission} representatives and Agency representatives. E.O. 127

On April 3, 1964, Coleman and Slawson articulated their conclusion for necessary complete access to all materials relevant to Oswald's Mexico City trip. They wrote

The most probable final result of the entire investigation of Oswald's activities in Mexico is a conclusion that he went there for the purpose of trying to reach Cuba and that no riots, conspiracies, etc., took place.

... In order to make such a judgement (that all reasonable lines of investigation that might have uncovered the motivations or possible conspiracies, have been followed through with negative results) we must be conversant with the detail of what both the American and Mexican investigative agencies have done. This means reading their reports, after translation if necessary, and in some cases talking with the investigators themselves.

Thoroughness of investigation
The familiarity with the detail

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4B) and Winston Scott of the CIA.

That same day during a meeting between the Commission representatives and Win Scott, Scott made available to the group ~~the~~ actual transcripts of the telephone surveillance operations and English translation of the same. David Slawson wrote:

"Mr. Scott stated at the beginning of his narrative that he intended to make a complete disclosure of all facts, including the source of his information, and that he understood that all three of us had been cleared for TOP SECRET and that we would not disclose beyond the confines of the Commission and its immediate staff the information we obtained through him without first clearing it with his superiors in Washington. We agreed to this. [Slawson memo, April 22, 1964, p 22]

Mr. Scott described to the Commission representatives the CIA's course of action immediately following the assassination. Scott indicated that his staff ^{at that point began to} compile dossier on Oswald, DeLoach, and everyone else throughout Mexico whom the CIA knew had had some contact with Oswald [p 22]. Scott revealed

In addition to providing the group with notes, photocopies, and the transcript, we were given Oswald's most recent photograph, a photograph of the Cuban & Soviet Embassy entrance.

all known Cuban and Russian intelligence agents had immediately been put under surveillance following the assassination. Simon was setup with Mexican friends, particularly Luis Echevarria, acting minister of the Mexican Embassy in [p 23-24]. Slawson then concludes in his memorandum:

Scott's narrative plus the material we were shown disclosed immediately how incorrect our previous information had been on Oswald's contacts with the Soviet and Mexican Embassies. Apparently the distortions and omissions to which our information had been subjected had entered some place in Washington, because the CIA information that we were shown by Scott was unambiguous on almost all the crucial points. We had previously planned to show Scott, Slawson's reconstruction of Oswald's probable activities at the embassies to get Scott's opinion, but once we saw how badly distorted our information was we realized that it would be useless. Therefore, instead, we decided to take as close note as possible from the

original source materials
at some later time during or
about [p 21]

Slawson's memorandum of April 21, 1964
reads the results of the notetaking
from original source materials that
he did following Scott's disclosure.
These notes deal exclusively with the
telephonic intercept pertaining to Robert
Duran and Oswald conversations.

It is evident from Slawson's report,
that the Agency's denial of original
source materials, in this case the
telephonic surveillance intercepts,
seriously impaired the Commission's
ability to draw conclusions regarding
Oswald's voyage to Mexico City, based
upon the best sources available. It
meant that as of April 10, 1964,
during the halfway point of the
Warren Commission investigation,
the Commission was forced to
retrace the factual path by which
it had structured Oswald's activities
in Mexico City. It further reveals
that the Agency had provided
ambiguous information to the Commission
when in fact "in almost all the crucial
points significantly more precise
materials were available for analysis by
the Commission. Thus, the Agency's
early policy of not providing the Commission
with the vitally relevant information,

~~details~~ / in certain circumstances
 and methods had seriously undermined
 the investigation and possibly
 foreclosed ~~cl~~ing investigation that
 might have been ^{more serious} considered had the
 material been ~~op~~positionally provided.

photograph by the Central Intelligence Agency. Parker requested that the identity of the individual depicted in the photograph and information be available.

On that same day, in a separate letter to DCT McCone, Parker wrote that the Commission had been informed by the Secret Service that the CIA had disseminated several reports or communications concerning the assassination to the Secret Service on November 22, 1964. Parker requested copies of these reports and the originals.

It is noted that the report was not in any fashion or unbeknownst to Parker and the Commission, among others, that the material disseminated to the Secret Service was a November 26 dissemination (DIR 85/77) a copy of which was transmitted to the Secret Service. That cable concerned the Dallas assassination and disclosed the existence of a telephone surveillance operation in Mexico City at the time of the assassination and Dallas earlier about.

John Seabrook testified regarding the circumstances surrounding the eventual application given to the

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mole.

On November 23, 1963, Margaret Oswald was shown a photograph of a man bearing no resemblance to her son. This photograph had been supplied to the FBI on November 22, by the CIA's Mexico City Station. The photograph was a series of ~~photographs~~ of the individual man (later known as the Mexico Mystery Man) resulting from the CIA's photo surveillance operation against the Soviet and Cuban Embassy. ~~Consulate~~ had been ~~linked~~ ^{by the Mexico City Station} to the operation to see if Oswald was by the CIA's Mexico City Station. ~~Revels~~ Helms is a sworn affidavit before the Warren Commission states that the photograph shown to Margaret Oswald had been taken on October 4, 1963, in Mexico City and mistakenly linked at that time to Oswald.

On February 10, 1964 Margaret Oswald testified before the Warren Commission and described the circumstances under which she was shown the photograph. Mr. Oswald testified that she believed the photograph to have been of Jack Ruby. p 183.

Thereafter on February 12, 1964, J. Lee Rankin wrote to Thomas Hall concerning Helms' assistant regarding the circumstances of the obtaining of the

after
admission
had
searched
then file
in an effort
to locate
information
on Oswald

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Commission of the origin of the
photograph in question. Seabrook
stated

We did not initially disclose
to the Warren Commission by
our technical operations. On
other words, we did not initially
disclose to them that we had
John F. Kennedy because the
November photo we had (of
mm) was not of Oswald. There-
fore it did not mean anything,
you see?

Mr. Goldsmith: ... So the Agency was
making a unilateral decision
that this was not relevant
to the Warren Commission.

Seabrook: Right, we were not authorized,
at first, to reveal ~~all~~ ^{all} our technical
operations.
[Seabrook dep. p 158]

Thus, at the same point in
time at which the Warren Commission
was beginning to realize the need
for access to telephone surveillance
data (as discussed in the preceding
section) the source of the photovision
surveillance operations, through
the source of the mm, began to
cause concern within the Agency.

On March 5, 1967, Raymond
Rosen wrote in an internal

memorandum to Richard Helms that "we have a problem before you determination. Rocca outlines Angleton's desire not to respond directly to Rankin's request of February 12 regarding CIA material forwarded to the Secret Service since November 23, 1964. Rocca then states:

Unless you feel otherwise, Jim would prefer to wait until the Commission on the matter covered by paragraph 2 (of the above-referenced February 12 letter) if it come back on this point before that you, in some form, should be prepared to go over to show the Commission the material with transcripts to them in copy. Incidentally, none of these items are of new substantive interest. We have either passed the material in substance to the Commission in response to earlier letters the items refer to dated leads, for example, the famous sex photograph which are not of Oswald...

[Rocca memo 5 March 64, FOIA 579-2507]

On March 12, 1964 representatives of the Warren Commission and the CIA

conferred regarding the February 12 request for the materials forwarded to the Secret Service by the Agency [See Rankin letter of March 16, 1964 and Slawson memo, March 12, 1964]

The record indicates that the Commission at the March 12 meeting passed for access to the Secret Service materials. Rankin wrote to Helms on March 16 that it was his understanding that the CIA would supply the Commission with a paraphrase of each report or communication pertaining to the Secret Service materials "with all indications of your confidential communications techniques and confidential sources deleted. You will also afford members of our staff working in this area an opportunity to review the actual file so that they may give assurance that the paraphrases are complete."

(Rankin letter of March 16, 1964 #2)

Rankin further indicates that the same procedure is to be followed regarding any materials in the possession of the CIA prior to November 22, 1963, which has not yet been furnished because of unresolved sensitive sources and methods. [Rankin letter, March 16, #3]

Helms responded to Rankin's March 16 letter on March 24 [DDP4-1554, CD631 & DDP4-1555, CP 674] by two separate communications. CD631 provides the Commission

with a copy of the October 10, 1963
 CIA dissemination to FBI, State Dept, -
 INS & Navy Dept (SS on 22 Nov). Regarding Lee Harvey
 Oswald and his presence at the Soviet
 Consulate in Mexico City. The response
 further revealed that on October 23, 1964,
 CIA had requested two copies of its
 most recent photograph of Oswald
 in order to check the identity of the
 person believed to be Oswald in
 Mexico City. Furthermore, the CIA
 stated that ~~it has determined that the~~
 photograph shown to Marguerite on November
 22, 1963 did not refer to Lee Harvey
 Oswald by checking the photograph
 against the press photograph of
 Oswald generally available on November
 23, 1963.

CD 674 reveals that on November
 22, 1963 immediately following the
 assassination and on November
 23, 1963 three cabled reports were
 received at CIA Headquarters from
 the CIA Mexico City Station regarding
 photographs of an unidentified man
 who had visited the Cuban and
 Soviet Embassies during October and
 November 1963. Paragraphs of these
 cables, not including sensitive areas
 and methods were attached to CD 674.
 The Agency further states that the

subject of the photo referred to in
the cable about Oswald.

It is further stated that.

" In response to our meeting

of 12 March and your memo

of 16 March, Stern and

Wallen will review at

Largely the original copies

of these 3 dissemination

to the Secret Service and

the cable in which they

were based, as well as the

photo of the unidentified

man. [CIA P 116444]
+ notes

Begin w/ Cotac... unhappy 1 3/26

Also find out if

this involves tel.

surveillance

or just

concerned w/
photo operation

(8)

On March 26, William Coleman wrote in a memorandum for the record. The CIA directed a memorandum to J. Lee Rankin (Commissioner Document No 631) ^{March 24, 1964} in which it set forth the dissemination of the information on Lee Harvey Oswald. I realize that this memorandum is only a partial answer to our inquiry to the CIA dated March 16, 1964 and I hope that the complete answers will give us the additional information we requested.

Coleman went on to state:
As you know, we are still trying to get an explanation of the photograph which the FBI showed Marguerite Oswald soon after the assassination. I hope that paragraph 4 of the memorandum of March 24, 1964 (CP 631) sent Mr. Rankin by the CIA is not the answer which the CIA intends to give us as to the inquiry.

The following day, as agreed by Warren Commission and Agency representatives, Samuel Stein of the Commission visited CIA Headquarters

in Langley, Virginia.

Sten memorandum revealed that he reviewed Oswald's file with Raymond Pore. Sten indicates that Oswald's file contained those materials furnished previously to the Warren Commission by the CIA.

The file also contained:

- 1) Cable reports ^{November 22 & November 23} from the CIA's Mexico City Station relating to the photographs of the unidentified individual mentioned above (to be Lee Harvey Oswald) and the report on those cables furnished on November 23, 1963 to the Secret Service by the CIA.

Sten noted that the message was accurately paraphrased in the attachments to CD 674, provided the Warren Commission on March 24, 1964.

- 2) Sten also reviewed the Oct 19, 1963 cable from CIA's Mexico City Station to the CIA Headquarters reporting Oswald's contact with the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City. He also reviewed the Oct 10, 1963 cable from CIA Headquarters to the Mexico City Station regarding background information on Oswald.

Sten noted that the messages were also paraphrased accurately.

a reported in the CIA's ^{January 31 memo to} memo of ^{the Warren} Oswald's Mexico City trip ^{Committee} reports.

Latter

Stern noted that Rosen provided him for his review a computer printout of the reference to Oswald documents located in the Agency's electronic data storage system. He stated "There is no item listed on the printout which the Warren Commission has not been given by either in full text or paraphrase. This, by the 27th of March a Warren Commission report had been approved of the circumstances surrounding the magazine photograph." ~~Walter J. Rosten~~

review CD's 631-674 to determine exactly what content of cables was